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WEST GERMANY

Spy Hysteria

West Germans were stunned when Willy Brandt resigned as Chancellor last month after his longtime aide Günter Guillaume had been arrested on charges of being an East German spy. They were startled again when Günther Nollau, head of Bonn's principal internal security agency, the BfV, conceded in a television interview that other spies of "Guillaume's caliber" were probably operating at the highest levels of government. Now the country is reeling from a third shock: allegations that Nollau himself has been an East German spy.

Bonn's latest espionage flap began when *Capital*, a conservative monthly business magazine, announced that it had obtained a report supposedly prepared by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency on Communist spy activity in West Germany. Among other things, said *Capital*, the report showed that the best-placed East German agent in Bonn was not Guillaume but Nollau, 63, a self-effacing career counterspy who had joined the West German secret service soon after he left East Germany as a refugee in 1950.

The allegations drew a cascade of prompt denials from both U.S. and West German officials, who suggested, plausibly, that *Capital* had been the victim of a hoax concocted by right-wing intelligence agents hoping to further discredit Bonn's Social Democratic regime. Nollau pointed out several obvious errors in the purported CIA paper, and sought a court injunction to prevent *Capital* from printing the article. Citing "new information," the magazine promptly decided not to publish. By then, the episode had generated such a furor that Chancellor Helmut Schmidt worried aloud that West Germany might be succumbing to "spy hysteria."

And why not? By all accounts, West Germany has become something akin to a Disneyland for Communist agents. Last year the Soviet ambassador surprised the Bonn Foreign Ministry by sending a messenger over with a package. He was returning the original top-secret files on the NATO-wide exercise "Wintex 73" (the plan of political and civilian emergency measures to be taken in case of war). A complete U.S. Sidewinder missile was stolen in 1967 from a West German NATO base, dismantled and then shipped in convenient pieces by air freight to Moscow. By official reckoning, there are between 15,000 and 16,000 Communist agents operating in

West Germany, more than in any other Western country. About 80% of them work for East German intelligence, which undoubtedly passes on the information to the rest of the Soviet-bloc intelligence organizations.

Hidden Dangers. Considering the number of spies on the job, the competition for tangible results must be fierce. After all, how many secrets are left? Yet West Germany, as the linchpin of the Western alliance, continues to provide fertile ground for espionage. Some 200,000 U.S. soldiers and airmen are stationed there, backed by an array of tactical nuclear weapons. In addition to military secrets, the average spy in West Germany sends back inside information on government policymaking, back-room politicking and the latest rumors on the diplomatic circuit. If he suffers the humiliation of getting caught by one of West Germany's outnumbered

and slow-moving counterespionage agents, he has little to fear. The chances are that after a few years in jail, he will be exchanged for a captured Western agent and will return to a comfortable life as a national hero.

That may well be the fate of Guillaume, the biggest spy caught in West Germany since World War II. West German officials reckon that Guillaume apparently had an unusually sophisticated mission: to serve as a warning from the East German regime that there are hidden dangers in détente. According to this reasoning, the East Germans have achieved the international recognition they want from détente, but now refuse to open their country to more contacts with the West. Thus, by embarrassing Brandt, the East Germans hope to discredit *Ostpolitik* in Bonn and reduce the pressure for internal change.

The Nollau caper suggests that some right-wing West Germans, with their own political reasons for wanting to discredit Brandt's successors, have decided that spy hysteria can be as useful to them as it is to the Communists.